

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph on Page 5 beginning at line 7 as follows:

A preferred nucleic acid molecule according to the invention is one where the first polypeptide of the fusion protein comprises the following amino acid sequence of the autoprotease N^{pro} of CSFV (see also EMBL database accession number X87939) (amino acids 1 to 168, reading from N-terminal to the C-terminal direction)

[[(1) -]]MELNHFELLYKTSKQKPVGVVEEPVYDTAGRPLFGNPSEVHPQSTLKLPHDRGRGDIRTTLRDLPR KGDCRSGNHLGPPVSGIYIKPGPVYYQDYTGVPVYHRAPLEFFDEAQFCEVTKRIGRVTGSDGKLYHIYVCVD GCILLKLAKRGTPRTLKWIRNFTNCPLWVTSC- (168) , (SEQ ID NO: 1)

or the amino acid sequence of a derivative thereof with autoproteolytic activity.

Please amend the paragraph on Page 9 beginning at line 27 as follows:

The plasmid NPC-pET is constructed for expression of an N^{pro}-C fusion protein in a bacterial host. The expression vector used is the vector pET11a (F.W. Studier et al., Methods. Enzymol. 185 (1990), 60-89). The natural structural gene (from the CSFV RNA genome) for the N^{pro}-C fusion protein is cloned into this expression vector. The structural gene for this fusion protein is provided by PCR amplification from a viral genome which has been transcribed into cDNA (and cloned into a vector). Moreover the first 16 amino acids of the natural N^{pro}-sequence (SEQ ID NO: 3 MELNHFELLYKTSKQK) are replaced by a 10 amino acid-long oligo-histidine purification aid (SEQ ID NO: 4 MASHHHHHHH). The resulting construct is called NPC-pET. The sequence of the N^{pro} portion and the autoproteolytic cleavage site of the N^{pro}-C fusion protein encoded on the NPC-pET has the following structure, with the cleavage site being located between the amino acids Cys168 and Ser(169):

MASHHHHHHHFVGVVEEPVYDTAGRPLFGNPSEVHPQSTLKLPHDRGRGDIRTTLRDLPRKGDCRSGNHLGPPVSGIYIKPGPVYYQDYTGVPVYHRAPLEFFDEAQFCEVTKRIGRVTGSDGKLYHIYVCVDGCILLKLAKRGTPRTLKWIRNFTNCPLWVTSC (168) **S (169) DDGAS-(nucleocapsid protein C)** (SEQ ID NO: 2)

Please amend the paragraph on Page 12 beginning at line 8 as follows:

The plasmid NP6-pET is constructed for expression of the N^{pro}-hIL6 fusion protein. pET11a (F.W. Studier et al., Methods. Enzymol. 185 (1990), 60-89) is used as expression vector. Firstly a fusion protein consisting of N^{pro} and the CSFV nucleocapsid protein is cloned into this expression vector (see Example 1). The structural gene for this fusion protein is provided by a PCR. This entails the first 16 aa of the natural N^{pro} sequence (SEQ ID NO: 3 MELNHFELLYKTSKQK) being replaced by a 10 aa-long oligo-histidine purification aid (SEQ ID NO: 4 MASHHHHHHH).

Please amend the paragraph on Page 12 beginning at line 26 as follows:

5' - ATAATTACTA GTTGTGCTCC AGTACCTCCA GGTGAAG -3' (SEQ ID NO: 5)

Please amend the paragraph on Page 12 beginning at line 28 as follows:

5' - ATAATTGGAT CCTCGAGTTA TTACATTTGC CGAAGAGCCC TCAGGC -3' (SEQ ID NO: 6)

Please amend the paragraph on Page 13 beginning at line 8 as follows:

The sequence of the PCR fragment (593 bp) with the structural gene for hIL6 is depicted below (read in the N-terminal to C-terminal direction). The restriction cleavage sites are underlined, and the first codon of hIL6 (Ala) and the stop codon are printed in bold:

ATAATTACTAGTTGT**GCT**CCAGTACCTCCAGGTGAAGATTCTAAAGATGTAGCCGCCCCACACAGACAGCC
ACTCACCTCTTCAGAACGAATTGACAAACAAATTCGGTACATCCTCGACGGCATCTCAGCCCTGAGAAAGG
AGACATGTAACAAGAGTAACATGTGTGAAAGCAGCAAAGAGGCACTGGCAGAAAACAACCTGAACCTTCCA
AAGATGGCTGAAAAAGATGGATGCTTCCAATCTGGATTCAATGAGGAGACTTGCCTGGTAAAAATCATCAC
TGGTCTTTTGGAGTTTGAGGTATACCTAGAGTACCTCCAGAACAGATTTGAGAGTAGTGAGGAACAAGCCA
GAGCTGTGCAGATGAGTACAAAAGTCCTGATCCAGTTCCTGCAGAAAAAGGCAAAGAATCTAGATGCAATA
ACCACCCCTGACCCAACCACAAATGCCAGCCTGCTGACGAAGCTGCAGGCACAGAACCAGTGGCTGCAGGA
CATGACAACCTCATCTCATTCTGCGCAGCTTTAAGGAGTTCCTGCAGTCCAGCCTGAGGGCTCTTCGGCAA
TG**TAATA**ACTCGAGGATCCAATTAT (SEQ ID NO: 7)

Please amend the paragraph on Page 13 beginning at line 21 as follows:

The sequence of the N^{pro}-hIL6 fusion protein (347 amino acids, of which 162 amino acids for the N^{pro} portion and 185 amino acids for the hIL6 portion), encoded on NP6-pET is depicted below, with the hIL6 sequence being printed in bold:

MASHHHHHHHFVGVEEPVYDTAGRPLFGNPSEVHPQSTLKLPHDRGRGDIRTTLRDLPRKGDCRSNGHLGP
VSGIYIKPGPVYQDYTGVPYHRAPLEFFDEAQFCEVTKRIGRVTGSDGKLYHIYVCVDGCILLKLAKRG
PRTLKWIRNFTNCPLWVTS**APVPPGEDSKDVAAPHRQPLTSSERIDKQIRYILDGISALRKETCNKSNMC**
ESSKEALAENNLNLPKMAEKDGC**FQSGFNEETCLVKIITGLLEFEVYLEYLQNR****FESSEEQARAVQMSTKV**
LIQFLQKKAKNLDAITTPDPTTNASLLTKLQAQNQWLQDMTTHLILRSFKEFLQSSLRALRQM (SEQ ID NO: 8)

Please amend the paragraph on Page 15 beginning at line 23 as follows:

Oligonucleotide 1 ("N-terminal"):

5' - ATAATTACTA GTTGTGTGA TCTGCCTCAA ACCCACAGCC -3' (SEQ ID NO: 9)

Please amend the paragraph on Page 15 beginning at line 25 as follows:

Oligonucleotide 2 ("C-terminal"):

5'- ATAATTGGAT CCTCGAGTTA TTATTCCTTA CTTCTTAAAC TTTCTTGCAA G -3' (SEQ ID NO: 10)

Please amend the paragraph on Page 16 beginning at line 1 as follows:

The sequence of the PCR fragment (533 bp) with the structural gene for IFN α 2B is depicted below. The restriction cleavage sites are underlined, and the first codon of IFN α 2B (Cys) and the stop codon are printed in bold:

ATAATTACTAGTTGTT**TGT**GATCTGCCTCAAACCCACAGCCTGGGTAGCAGGAGGACCTTGATGCTCCTGGC
ACAGATGAGGAGAATCTCTCTTTTCTCCTGCTTGAAGGACAGACATGACTTTGGATTTCCTCCAGGAGGAGT
TTGGCAACCAGTTCCAAAAGGCTGAAACCATCCCTGTCCTCCATGAGATGATCCAGCAGATCTTCAATCTC
TTCAGCACAAAGGACTCATCTGCTGCTTGGGATGAGACCCTCCTAGACAAATTCTACACTGAACTCTACCA
GCAGCTGAATGACCTGGAAGCCTGTGTGATACAGGGGGTGGGGGTGACAGAGACTCCCCTGATGAAGGAGG
ACTCCATTCTGGCTGTGAGGAAATACTTCCAAAGAATCACTCTCTATCTGAAAGAGAAGAAATACAGCCCT
TGTGCCTGGGAGGTTGTCAGAGCAGAAATCATGAGATCTTTTCTTTGTCAACAAACTTGCAAGAAAGTTT
AAGAAGTAAGGAAT**TAATA**ACTCGAGGATCCAATTAT (SEQ ID NO: 11)

Please amend the paragraph on Page 16 beginning at line 13 as follows:

The sequence of the N^{pro}-IFN α 2B fusion protein (327 aa, of which 162 N^{pro} and 165 IFN α 2B) encoded on NPI-pET is depicted below, with the IFN α 2B sequence being printed in bold (depicted in the direction from the N-terminus to the C-terminus):

MASHHHHHHHFVGVEEPVYDTAGRPLFGNPSEVHPQSTLKLPHDRGRGDIRTTLRDLPRKGDCRSGNHLGP
VSGIYIKPGPVYYQDYTGVPYHRAPLEFFDEAQFCEVTKRIGRVTGSDGKLYHIYVCVDGCILLKLAKRG
PRTLKWIRNFTNCPLWVTSC**CDLPQTHSLGSRRTLMLLAQMRRISLFSCLKDRHDFGFPQEEFGNQFQKAE**
TIPVLHEMIQQIFNLFSTKDSSAAWDETLLDKFYTELYQQLNDEACVIQGVGVTEETPLMKEDSILAVRKY
FQRITLYLKEKKYSPCAWEVVRAEIMRSFSLSTNLQESLRSKE (SEQ ID NO: 12)